**Clothing and Comfort Policy**

**Rationale:**

We believe that all children should wear clothing that is not only safe and comfortable, but appropriate for the play-based experiences that we provide.

Clothing needs to protect children from injury and sun exposure while promoting self-help abilities.

**Policy:**

The need for comfortable, protective and appropriate clothing will be paramount within The Avenue Children’s Centre and Kindergarten. The need to keep children safe and healthy by providing sun smart, weather conscience clothing and appropriate footwear for play is essential.

**Strategies and practices:**

Effective clothing and comfort strategies, including sun protection clothing, are important factors in ensuring a child feels secure and safe in the centre.

The Avenue Children’s Centre and Kindergarten endeavours to consult with families about their child’s individual needs and to be aware of the different values and parenting beliefs, cultural or otherwise that are associated with clothing and footwear. In The Avenue Children’s Centre and Kindergarten the term ‘clothing and footwear’ encompasses:

* safe sleepwear
* sun protective clothing, including hats
* clothing for messy play, including art smocks
* appropriate clothing for changing weather conditions and temperature of play environments
* clothing to facilitate self-help, including role play props and clothing; and
* safe footwear for play experiences such as climbing and running.

**Clothing and Footwear**

**Sleep time and clothing**

* Educators to monitor the temperature of the rest environment and address children’s clothing needs
* Educators to encourage children to remove shoes and heavy layers of clothing during the rest time
* Children resting in jumpers with hoods and cords are at higher risk of choking and are not to wear these garments when resting.
* Sleepwear should take into consideration the:
	+ child’s age
	+ safe resting practices established by the centre
	+ temperature of the rest environment
	+ bed linen used for resting

**Clothing for messy play**

The centre can identify when protective clothing for messy play is required. For example, smocks are offered during:

* Painting and collage experiences
* Clay or water play

**Clothing and the Indoor/Outdoor Environmental Conditions/Temperatures**

* Educators to encourage families to provide spare clothing in children bags to allow for dirty and soil clothing and changing weather condition. Spare clothing will be available at The Avenue Children’s Centre and Kindergarten for emergency clothing needs
* Educators /staff monitor the temperature of both the indoor and outdoor environment and respond to this environment accordingly, i.e. turning on the heating/air-conditioning, putting on/taking off children’s clothing, etc.
* Clothing to facilitate self-help, including role play clothing
* Children are given many opportunities to participate in role playing and dress ups to help facilitate self-help skills
* Children are encouraged to dress themselves according to their individual abilities.
* Safe footwear for play experiences such as climbing and running
* The Avenue Children’s Centre and Kindergarten identify:
* Footwear most age appropriate for children in our care are sneakers, sandals with support, and covered footwear.
* We do not expect children who are not yet walking to be wearing any footwear

**Protective behaviours and practices**

The Avenue Children’s Centre and Kindergarten can identify the situations children need to be supervised when dressing and undressing, depending upon age, abilities and the centre’s setting.

Educators/staff/ students and volunteers as role models

* Children learn through example and role modelling is an important strategy in children’s services to maintain quality standards.
* The Avenue Children’s Centre and Kindergarten identifies the appropriate clothing and footwear guidelines that educators, staff, students and volunteers comply with and adhere to when caring for children (see Staff Dress Code statement)

**Links to other policies:**

* Child protection
* Enrolment Procedure
* Occupational Health and Safety Policy
* Sun Smart Policy
* Staff and Educators Handbook
* Sleep and Rest Policy
* Dress Code for Staff

**Sources and further reading:**

* Education and Care Services National Regulation
* SIDS and Kids –sidsandkids.org
* Cancer Council Australia
* Podiatry Care –www.podiatrycare.com.au
* Guide to National Quality Standard ACECQA

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**Approved by:** COM  **Date:** 27/11/2007